IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-67. (Canceled)

68. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vaccinia virus vector comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of ~~a prokaryotic promoter,~~ a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein starting in the region between amino acid positions 117 and 192 and ending in the region between amino acid positions 250 and 400.

69. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A recombinant vector comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of ~~a prokaryotic promoter,~~ a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein starting in the region between amino acid positions 117 and 192 and ending in the region between amino acid positions 263 and 400, and wherein said recombinant vector is a vector for recombinant expression of a

recombinant HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein in lower eukaryotic or mammalian host cells ~~326~~.

70. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of ~~a prokaryotic promoter,~~ a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein bearing a deletion of the first hydrophobic domain between positions 264 to 293, plus or minus 8 amino acids.

Claims 71-72. (Canceled)

73. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70, ~~claim 67,~~ with said nucleotide sequence further comprising operably linked a 5'-terminal ATG codon and a 3'-terminal stop codon.

74. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70 with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that a factor Xa cleavage site and/or 3 to 10, preferably 6, histidine codons have been added 3'-terminally to the coding region.

Claim 75. (Canceled)

76. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector ~~vector ,~~ comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of ~~a prokaryotic promotor,~~ a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that at least one of the glycosylation sites present in said E1 ~~or E2 protein~~ has been removed at the nucleic acid level.

77. (Currently Amended) A vaccine composition comprising a recombinant vector , comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of ~~a prokaryotic promotor,~~ a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein .

Claim 78. (Canceled)

79. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising a recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70, 76 and 95 .

Claims 80-84. (Canceled)

85. (Previously Presented) A method for immunizing a mammal comprising administering a composition of claim 79 to said mammal.

86. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 79, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant.

87. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76 and 95, with said vector being characterized as a live recombinant vector.

88. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76 and 95 wherein said vector is a vaccinia virus vector.

89. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76 and 95 wherein said vector is avipox.

90. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76 and 95 wherein said vector is Ankara Modified Virus (AMV).

91. (Previously Presented) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76 and 95 wherein said vector is a baculovirus vector.

Claims 92-94. (Canceled)

95. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector comprising any of the sequences as represented by SEQ ID NOs: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, or parts thereof.

96. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector of any one of claims 68-70, 76 and 77 wherein said nucleotide sequence is a nucleotide sequence represented by SEQ ID NOs: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, or parts thereof.

97. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector of claim 69 wherein said nucleotide sequence is a nucleotide sequence represented by SEQ ID NOs:7, 9, 11, 13, 23, 29, 31, or parts thereof.

98. (Previously Presented) A vaccine composition comprising a recombinant vector of any of claims 68, 70, 76, 95 or 97.

99. (Previously Presented) A method of immunizing a mammal comprising administering a vaccine composition of claim 77 to said mammal.

100. (Previously Presented) A method of immunizing a mammal comprising administering a vaccine composition of claim 97 to said mammal.

101. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 77, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant.